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Mr. Dulles' Long Essay

Allen Dulles, who was a top man in the CIA more than 10 years, has written a book about the most mysterious division of our government—the Central Intelligence Agency.

The book, said to be 41,000 words, will be published in full later. But parts of it have been made public.

Mr. Dulles uses the opportunity to take another swing at the idea that a "watchdog" committee of Congress should keep an intimate eye on what the CIA does — just as the Joint Atomic Energy Committee works closely with the executive Atomic Energy Commission, also a secret operation in many ways.

The ex-director of the CIA claims Congress already exercises "legislative control" over "what is, after all, very distinctly a function of the executive branch."

All the more reason for the "watchdog." Scores of examples from the past have shown that unless there is a congressional check on the executive branch, executive agencies frequently go hog-wild. Anyway, Congress doesn't have any more "control" over the CIA than the man in the moon.

But it isn't "control" especially that is being recommended. It is a responsible committee to keep tabs on the CIA. Somebody ought to know what this outfit is doing—and the public, at least, ought to know that this somebody is satisfied with the operation. An official committee of Congress is the most logical "somebody."

This agency spends nobody knows how many millions, or billions. It is nowhere to be seen in the published budget. The CIA doesn't tell who or how many work for it, or what they are paid. It spends money without the usual accounting required or other agencies.

It has unusual powers, largely unknown. Necessarily, no doubt. Mr. Dulles thinks the performance of the CIA should just be accepted on faith. But Congress should know, rather specifically, whether it is doing the job it was designed to do. In the past there has been good question about that.

This editorial also appeared in the Birmingham, Alabama, POST-HERALD, for 25 February 1963.

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